



THE "WIGWAM," CHICAGO—THE BUILDING IN WHICH THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1860 WAS HELD.

THE STORY OF LINCOLN'S NOMINATION IN 1860.

BASED ON THE PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF THE MEN WHO WERE MOST INSTRUMENTAL IN SECURING THE NOMINATION.

By IDA M. TARBELL.

THE possibility of Abraham Lincoln becoming the Presidential candidate of the Republican party in 1860 was probably first discussed by a few of his friends in 1856. The dramatic speech which in May of that year gave him the leadership of his party in Illinois,* and the unexpected and flattering attention he received a few weeks later at the Republican national convention,† suggested the idea; but there is no evidence that anything more was excited than a little idle speculation. The impression Lincoln made two years later in

the Lincoln and Douglas debates kindled a different feeling. It convinced a number of astute Illinois politicians that judicious effort would make Lincoln strong enough to justify the presentation of his name as a candidate in 1860 on the ground of pure availability.

One of the first men to conceive this idea was Jesse W. Fell, a local politician of Bloomington, Illinois. During the Lincoln and Douglas debates Fell had been travelling in the Middle and Eastern States. He was surprised to find that Lincoln's speeches attracted general attention, that many papers copied liberally from them, and that on all sides men plied

* See *McCLURE'S MAGAZINE* for September, 1896.

† Lincoln received 110 votes on the first ballot for the nomination to the Vice-Presidency at the national convention held in Philadelphia in June 1856.

him with questions about the career and personality of the new man. Before Fell left the East he had made up his mind that Lincoln must be pushed by his own State as its Presidential candidate. One evening, soon after returning home, he met Lincoln in Bloomington, where the latter was attending court, and drew him into a deserted law-office for a confidential talk.

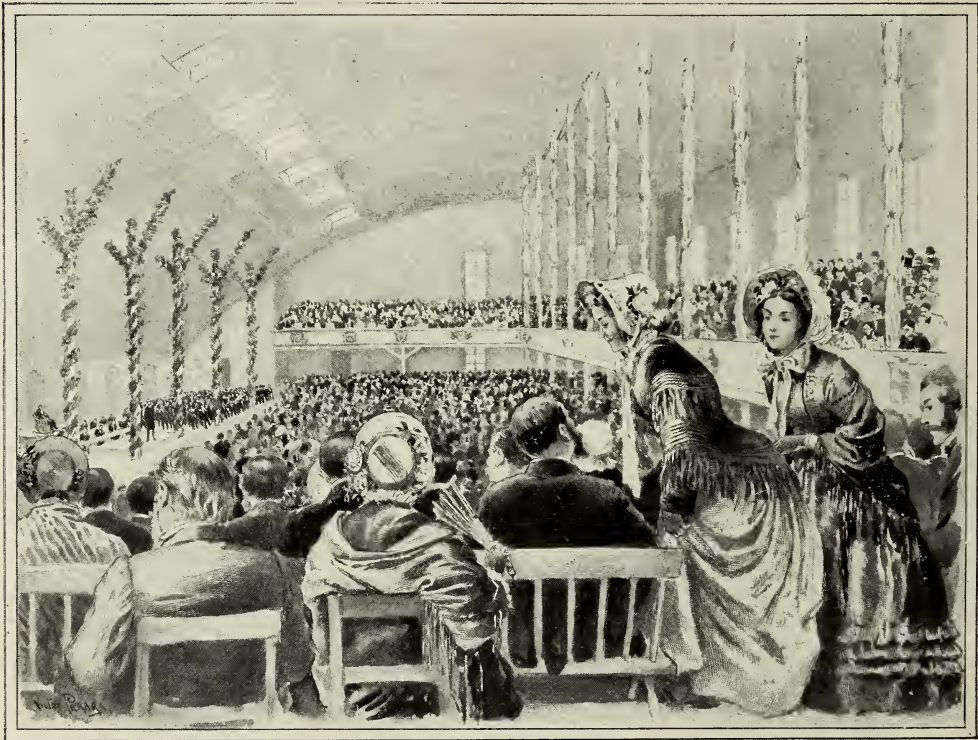
"I have been East, Lincoln," said he, "as far as Boston, and up into New Hampshire, travelling in all the New England States, save Maine; in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana; and everywhere I hear you talked about. Very frequently I have been asked, 'Who is this man Lincoln, of your State, now canvassing in opposition to Senator Douglas?' Being, as you know, an ardent Republican and your friend, I usually told them we had in Illinois *two* giants instead of one; that Douglas was the *little* one, as they all knew, but that you were the *big* one, which they didn't all know.

"But, seriously, Lincoln, Judge Douglas being so widely known, you are getting a national reputation *through him*, and the

truth is, I have a decided impression that if your popular history and efforts on the slavery question can be sufficiently brought before the people, you can be made a formidable, if not a successful, candidate for the Presidency."

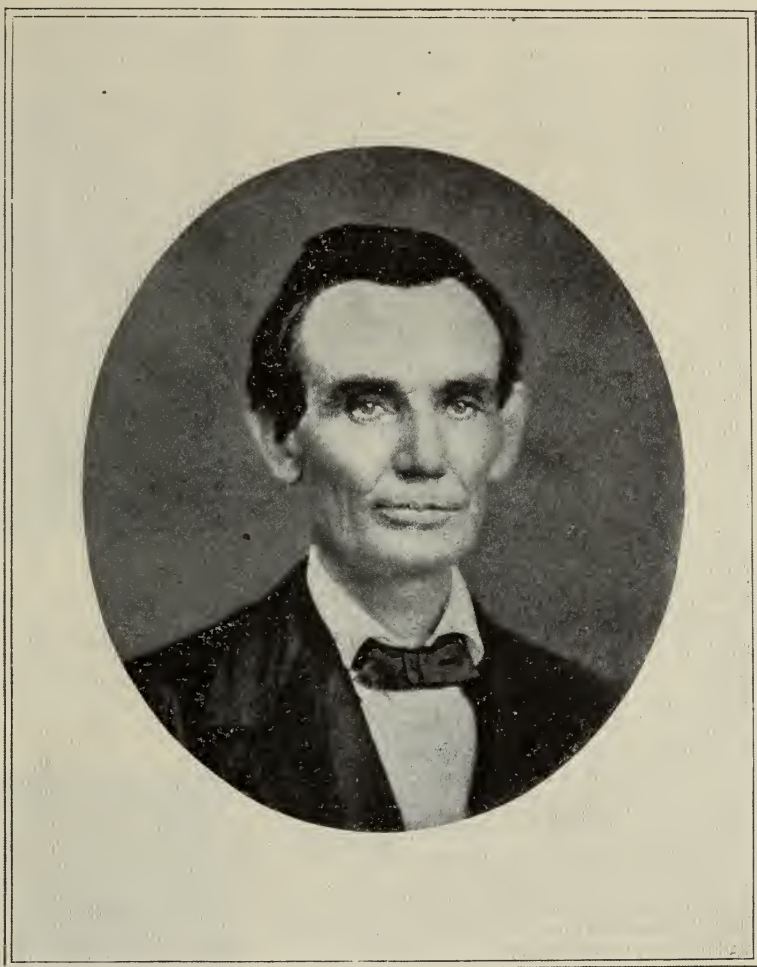
"What's the use of talking of me for the Presidency," was Lincoln's reply, "whilst we have such men as Seward, Chase, and others, who are so much better known to the people, and whose names are so intimately associated with the principles of the Republican party? Everybody knows them; nobody scarcely outside of Illinois knows me. Besides, is it not, as a matter of justice, due to such men, who have carried this movement forward to its present status, in spite of fearful opposition, personal abuse, and hard names? I really think so."

Fell continued his persuasions, and finally requested Lincoln to furnish him a sketch of his life which could be put out in the East. The suggestion grated on Lincoln's sensibilities. He had no chance. Why force himself? "Fell," he said, rising and wrapping his old gray shawl around his tall figure, "I admit that I am



THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1860.

After a drawing in "Harper's Weekly" of May 19, 1860, by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN 1853.

From an ambrotype owned by Mr. Hilyard of Superior, Nebraska, and taken at Danville, Illinois, as a gift to his father.

ambitious and would like to be President. I am not insensible to the compliment you pay me and the interest you manifest in the matter; *but there is no such good luck in store for me as the Presidency of these United States.* Besides, there is nothing in my early history that would interest you or anybody else; and, as Judge Davis says, *'it won't pay.'* Good night." And he disappeared into the darkness.

Lincoln's defeat in November, 1858, in the contest for the United States Senatorship, in no way discouraged his friends. A few days after the November election, when it was known that Douglas had been reëlected senator, the Chicago "Democrat," then edited by "Long John" Wentworth, printed an editorial, nearly a column in length, headed "Abraham Lincoln." His work in the campaign then

just closed was reviewed and commended in the highest terms. "His speeches," the "Democrat" declared, "will be recognized for a long time to come as the standard authorities upon those topics which overshadow all others in the political world of our day; and our children will read them and appreciate the great truths which they so forcibly inculcate, with even a higher appreciation of their worth than their fathers possessed while listening to them.

"We, for our part," said the "Democrat" further, "consider that it would be but a partial appreciation of his services to our noble cause that our next State Republican convention should nominate him for governor as unanimously and enthusiastically as it did for senator. With such a leader and with our just cause, we would

sweep the State from end to end, with a triumph so complete and perfect that there would be scarce enough of the scattered and demoralized forces of the enemy left to tell the story of its defeat. And this State should also present his name to the national Republican convention, first for President and next for Vice-President. We should say to the United States at large that in our opinion the Great Man of Illinois is Abraham Lincoln, and none other than Abraham Lincoln."

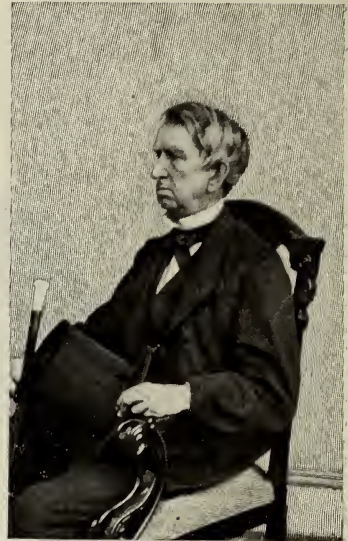
All through the year 1859 a few men in Illinois worked quietly but persistently to awaken a desire throughout the State for Lincoln's nomination. The greater number of these were lawyers on Lincoln's circuit, his life-long friends, men like Judge Davis, Leonard Swett, and Judge Logan, who not only believed in him, but loved him, and whose efforts were doubly effective because of their affection. In addition to these were a few shrewd politicians who saw in Lincoln the "available" man the situation demanded; and a group represented by John M. Palmer, who, remembering Lincoln's magnanimity in throwing his influence to Trumbull in 1854, in order to send a sound anti-Nebraska man to the United States Senate, wanted, as Senator Palmer himself put it, to "pay Lincoln back." Then there were a few young men who had been won by Lincoln in the debates with Douglas, and who threw youthful enthusiasm and conviction into their support.

The work which these men did at this time cannot be traced with any definiteness. It consisted mainly in "talking up" their candidate. They were greatly aided by the newspapers. The press, indeed, followed a concerted plan that had been carefully laid out by the Republican State Committee in the office of the Chicago "Tribune."

To give an appearance of spontaneity to the newspaper canvass it was arranged that the country papers should first suggest Lincoln's name. Joseph Medill, then, as now, of the "Tribune," and secretary of the committee, says that a Rock Island paper opened the campaign. On May 4, 1859, the "Central Illinois Gazette" came out for Lincoln, and one by one, at diplomatic intervals, other papers followed.

Lincoln soon felt the force of this effort in his behalf. Letters came to him from unexpected quarters, offering aid. Everywhere he went on the circuit, men sought him to discuss the situation. In the face of an undoubted movement for him he quailed. The interest was local; could it ever be more? Above all, had he the qualifications for President of the United States? He asked himself these questions as he pondered a reply to an editor who had suggested announcing his name, and he wrote: "I must in all candor say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency."

This was in April, 1859. In the July following he still declared himself unfit. Even in the following November he had little hope of nomination. "For my single self," he wrote to a correspondent who had suggested the putting of his name on the ticket, "I have enlisted for the permanent success of the Republican cause, and for this object I shall labor faithfully



WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

Seward's name was presented to the Chicago convention of 1860, which finally nominated Lincoln, by William M. Evarts of New York. On the first ballot he received 173½ votes, on the second 184½, on the third 180; 234 votes were necessary for a choice.*



SALMON P. CHASE,

Chase's name was presented to the Chicago convention of 1860 by D. K. Cartter of Ohio. On the first ballot he received 49 votes, on the second 42½, on the third 24½.

* The portraits on this and page 47 are all from photographs by Brady, now in the war collection of Mr. Robert Coster.



SIMON CAMERON.

Andrew H. Reeder of Pennsylvania presented Cameron's name to the Chicago convention. On the first ballot he received 50½ votes. On the second ballot his name was withdrawn, although two votes were cast for him. He received no votes on the third ballot.



EDWARD BATES.

F. P. Blair of Missouri nominated Mr. Bates in the Chicago convention. He received on the first ballot 48 votes, on the second 35, and on the third 22. At Lincoln's inauguration as President in March, 1861, Bates became a member of his cabinet, as did also three other of his competitors for the nomination in the convention of 1860—Seward, Chase, and Cameron.

in the ranks, unless, as I think not probable, the judgment of the party shall assign me a different position."

The last weeks of 1859 and the first of 1860 convinced Lincoln, however, that, fit or not, he was in the field. Fell, who as corresponding secretary of the Republican State Central Committee had been traveling constantly in the interests of the organization, brought him such proof that his candidacy was generally approved of, that in December, 1859, he consented to write the "little sketch" of his life now known as Lincoln's "autobiography."

He wrote it with a little inward shrinking, a half shame that it was so meagre. "There is not much of it," he apologized in sending the document, "for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me. If anything be made out of it, I wish it to be modest, and not to go beyond the material."

By the opening of 1860 Lincoln had concluded that, though he might not be a very promising candidate, at all events he was now in so deep that he must have the approval of his own State, and he began to work in earnest for that. "I am not in a position where it would hurt much for me to not be nominated on the national ticket," he wrote to Norman B. Judd, "but I am where it would hurt some for me to not get the Illinois delegates. . . . Can you help me a little in your end of the vineyard?"

The plans of the Lincoln men were well matured. About the first of December, 1859, Medill had gone to Washington, ostensibly as a "Tribune" correspondent, but really to promote Lincoln's nomination. "Before writing any Lincoln letters for the 'Tribune,'" says Mr. Medill in his "Reminiscences," "I began preaching Lincoln among the Congressmen. I urged him chiefly upon the ground of availability in the close and doubtful States, with what seemed like reasonable success."

On February 16, 1860, the "Tribune" came out editorially for Lincoln, and Medill followed a few days later with a ringing letter from Washington, naming Lincoln as a candidate on whom both conservative and radical sentiment could unite, and declaring that he now heard Lincoln's name mentioned for President in Washington "ten times as often as it was one month ago." About the time when Medill was writing thus, Norman B. Judd, as member of the Republican National Committee, was executing a manœuvre the importance of which no one realized but the Illinois politicians. This was securing the convention for Chicago.

As the spring passed and the counties of Illinois held their conventions, Lincoln found that, save in the north, where Seward was strong, he was unanimously recommended as a candidate at Chicago. When the State convention met at Decatur on May 9th and 10th, he received an ovation of so picturesque and unique a character that it colored all the rest of the campaign. The delegates were in session when Lincoln came in as a spectator and was invited to a seat on the platform. Soon after, Richard Oglesby, one of Lincoln's ardent supporters, asked that an old



From a photograph by Sarony, New York.

HORACE GREELEY.

In the Republican national convention of 1860 Horace Greeley sat as the alternate of an absent delegate from Oregon. He had failed to be chosen a delegate from his own State (New York), through the opposition of the Seward men. As editor of the New York "Tribune," it was supposed, until a short time before the convention, that he would support Seward for the nomination to the Presidency, but he turned against Seward on the plea that he could not be elected. In the convention he labored ardently for Bates.



JESSE W. FELL.

Mr. Fell, a Pennsylvanian by birth, settled in Bloomington, Illinois. Here he became acquainted with Lincoln, who was frequently in the town during court terms. He was one of the first Republicans of the State; he first introduced Lincoln's name in Pennsylvania as a candidate for the Presidency, and it was to him that Lincoln addressed his well-known autobiography.

Democrat of Macon County be allowed to offer a contribution to the convention. The offer was accepted, and a curious banner was borne up the hall. The standard was made of two weather-worn fence-rails, decorated with flags and streamers, and bearing the inscription:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE RAIL CANDIDATE

FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860.

Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in 1830 by Thos. Hanks and Abe Lincoln—whose father was the first pioneer of Macon County.

A storm of applause greeted the banner, followed by cries of "Lincoln! Lincoln!" Rising, Lincoln said, pointing to the banner, "I suppose I am expected to reply to that. I cannot say whether I made those rails or not, but I am quite sure I have made a great many just as good." * The speech was warmly applauded, and one delegate, an influential German and an ardent Seward man, after witnessing the demonstration, turned to his neighbor and said, "Seward has lost the Illinois delegation." † He was right; for when, later, John M. Palmer, at present United States Senator and the nominee of the anti-silver Democrats for President, brought forth a resolution that "Abraham Lincoln is the choice of the Republican party of Illinois for the Presidency, and the delegates from this State are instructed to use all honorable means to secure his nomination by the Chicago Convention, and to vote as a unit for him," it was enthusiastically adopted.

INDIFFERENCE OF THE EAST TO LINCOLN.

While the politicians of Illinois were thus preparing for the campaign, the Re-

* Congressman John Davis of Kansas, who was present at the Decatur convention and took down Mr. Lincoln's words, has courteously allowed us the use of his notes.

† Mr. George Schneider of Chicago, at that date editor of the "Staats Zeitung," and now president of the National Bank of Illinois.

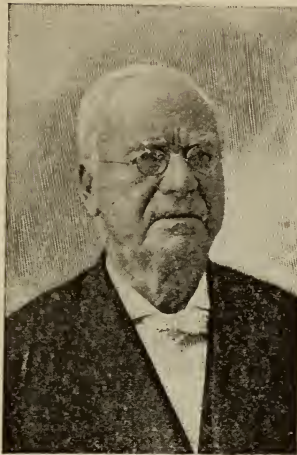


From a photograph by I. H. Bonsall, Army Photographer, Cincinnati, Ohio; loaned by General Palmer's son.

GENERAL JOHN M. PALMER.

From a photograph taken in 1863. Mr. Palmer was born in Kentucky in 1817, and removed to Illinois in 1832. Here he studied law, and was admitted to practice in 1840. Although an active Democrat, he revolted against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and joined the anti-Nebraska branch of his party. In 1854 he was one of the five men in the State legislature who secured the election of Lyman Trumbull to the United States Senate. He was chairman of the first Republican State convention held in Illinois, and a delegate to the Republican national convention in 1856; and he contributed no little to the nomination of Lincoln to the Presidency in 1860. He served throughout the war, and was raised for gallant conduct to the rank of Major-General. He has since served as Governor of Illinois and United States Senator, and he is now the nominee of the anti-silver Democrats for President.

publicans of the East hardly realized that Lincoln was or could be made a possibility. In the first four months of 1860 his name was almost unmentioned as a Presidential candidate in the public prints of the East. In a list of twenty-one "prominent candidates for the Presidency in 1860," prepared by D. W. Bartlett and published in New York towards the end of 1859, Lincoln's name is not mentioned; nor does it appear in a list of thirty-four of "our living representative men," prepared for Presidential purposes by John Savage, and published in Philadelphia in 1860.* The most important notice at this period of which we know was a casual mention in an editorial in the New York "Evening Post" on February 15th. The "Post" considered it time for the Republicans to speak out about the nominee at the coming convention, and remarked: "With such men as Seward and Chase, Banks and *Lincoln*, and others in plenty, let us have two Republican representative men to vote for." This was ten days before the Cooper Union speech and the New England tour, which undoubtedly did much to recommend Lincoln as a logical and statesmanlike thinker and debater, though there is no evidence that it created him a Presidential following in the East, save, perhaps, in New Hampshire. Indeed it was scarcely to be expected that prudent and conservative men who knew little of him, save as he had exhibited himself in the Lincoln and Douglas debates and in the Cooper Union speech, would conclude that, because he could make a good speech, he would make a good President. They knew him to be comparatively untrained in public life and comparatively untried in large affairs. They naturally preferred a



From a photograph by Tandy, Lincoln, Illinois; loaned by W. O. Paisley.

RICHARD J. OGLESBY.

Richard J. Oglesby was born in Kentucky in 1824. Left an orphan at the age of eight years, he removed to Illinois, and there learned the carpenter's trade. In 1845 he was admitted to the bar, but his practice of the law was interrupted by service in the Mexican War and three years of mining in California. Returning to Illinois, he became influential in politics. It was he who suggested to Lincoln's stepbrother, John D. Johnston, bringing the rails into the State convention at Decatur in 1860. He served with honor in the Union army until 1864, when he resigned, and in November of that year was elected governor of his State. He was in Washington at the time of Lincoln's assassination. He continued to serve as governor until 1869, and he has served several terms since. From 1873 to 1879 he was United States Senator.

man who had a record for executive statesmanship.

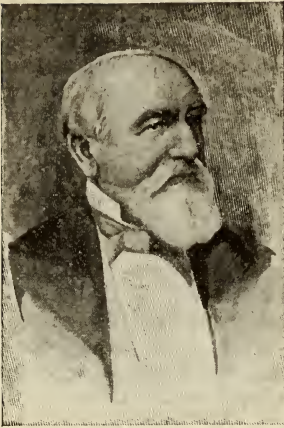
Up to the opening of the convention in May there was, in fact, no specially prominent mention of Lincoln by the Eastern press. Greeley, intent on undermining Seward, though as yet nobody perceived him to be so, printed in the New York weekly "Tribune"—the paper which went to the country at large—correspondence favoring the nomination of Bates and Read, McLean and Bell, Cameron, Frémont, Dayton, Chase, Wade; but not Lincoln. The New York "Herald" of May 1st, in discussing editorially the nominee of the "Black Republicans," recognized "four living, two dead, aspirants." The "living" were Seward, Banks, Chase, and Cameron; the "dead," Bates and McLean. On May 10th "The Independent," in an editorial on "The Nomination at Chicago," said: "Give us a man known to be true upon the only question that enters into the canvass—a Seward, a Chase, a Wade, a Sumner, a Fessenden, a Banks." But it did not mention Lincoln. His most conspicuous Eastern recognition before the convention was in "Harper's Weekly"

of May 12th, his face being included in a double page of portraits of "eleven prominent candidates for the Republican Presidential nomination at Chicago." Brief biographical sketches appeared in the same number—the last and the shortest of them being of Lincoln.

PREPARING FOR THE CONVENTION.

It was on May 16th that the Republican convention of 1860 formally opened at Chicago, but for days before the city was in a tumult of expectation and preparation. The audacity of inviting a national convention to meet there, in the condition in which Chicago chanced to be at that time, was purely Chicagoan. No other city

* These pamphlets are found in the admirable Lincoln collection of Mr. William H. Lambert of Philadelphia.



NORMAN B. JUDD.

A New Yorker by birth, Norman B. Judd moved to Illinois in 1836, when twenty-one years of age, and there began practice of the law. In 1844 he was elected to the State Senate, where he served for sixteen consecutive years. Prominent as the attorney of several railroads, he frequently called in Lincoln as an associate. From the beginning of the anti-Nebraska agitation he was active in politics, and he did much to bring about Lincoln's nomination in 1860. In 1861 he was appointed minister to Prussia. He served in the forty-second and forty-third Congresses, and was afterwards collector of customs at Chicago. He died in 1878.

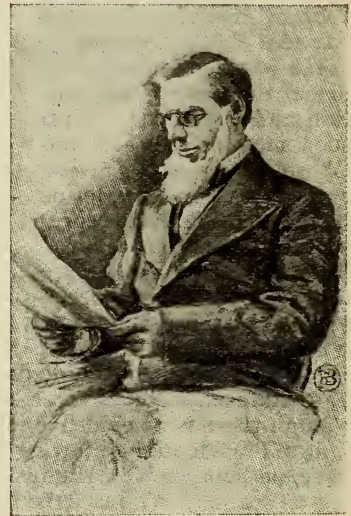
would have risked it. In ten years Chicago had nearly quadrupled its population, and it was believed that the feat would be repeated in the coming decade. In the first flush of youthful energy and ambition the town had undertaken the colossal task of raising itself bodily out of the grassy marsh, where it had been originally placed, to a level of twelve feet above Lake Michigan, and of putting underneath a good, solid foundation. When the invitation to the convention was extended, half the buildings in Chicago were on stilts; some of the streets had been raised to the new grade, others still lay in the mud; half the sidewalks were poised high on piles, and half were still down on a level with the lake. A city with a conventional sense of decorum would not have cared to be seen in this demoralized condition, but Chicago perhaps conceived that it would but prove her courage and confidence to show the country what she was doing; and so she had the convention come.

But it was not the convention alone which came. Besides the delegates, the professional politicians, the newspaper men, and the friends of the several candidates, there came a motley crowd of men hired to march and to cheer for particular candidates,—a kind of out-of-door *claque* which did not wait for a point to be made in favor of its man, but went off in rounds of applause at the mere mention of his name. New York brought the greatest number of these professional applauders, the leader of them being a notorious prize-fighter and street politician,—“a sort of white blackbird,” said Bromley,—one Tom Hyer. With the New York delegation, which numbered all told fully 2,000 Seward men, came Dodworth's Band, one of

the celebrated musical organizations of that day.

While New York sent the largest number, Pennsylvania was not far behind, there being about 1,500 persons present from that State. From New England, long as was the distance, there were many trains of excursionists. The New England delegation took Gilmore's Band with it, and from Boston to Chicago stirred up every community in which it stopped, with music and speeches. Several days before the convention opened fully one half of the members of the United States House of Representatives were in the city.* To still further increase the throng were hundreds of merely curious spectators whom the flattering inducements of the fifteen railroads centring in Chicago at that time had tempted to take a trip. There were fully 40,000 strangers in the city during the sitting of the convention.

The streets for a week were the forum of this multitude. Processions for Seward, for Cameron, for Chase, for Lincoln, marched and counter-marched, brave with banners and transparencies, and noisy with country bands and hissing rockets. Every street corner became a rostrum, where impromptu harangues for any of a dozen candidates might be happened upon. In this hurly-burly two figures were particu-



LEONARD SWETT.

Born in Maine in 1825, it was not until 1849, after he had served through the Mexican War, that Leonard Swett settled in Bloomington, Illinois, where he began practice of the law. He travelled the Eighth Circuit with Lincoln until the latter was elected to the Presidency. Mr. Swett took an active part in the anti-slavery agitation in Illinois, aided in Lincoln's nomination in 1860, and was a trusted adviser of Lincoln's throughout the period of the civil war.

* Boston "Herald," May 15, 1860, Chicago correspondence.

larly prominent: Tom Hyer, who managed the open-air Seward demonstration, and Horace Greeley, who was conducting independently his campaign against Seward. Greeley, in his fervor, talked incessantly. It was only necessary for some one to say in a rough but friendly way, "There's old Greeley," and all within hearing distance grouped about him. Not infrequently the two or three to whom he began speaking increased until that which had started as a conversation ended as a speech.

In this half-spontaneous, half-organized demonstration of the streets, Lincoln's followers were conspicuous. State pride made Chicago feel that she must stand by her own. Lincoln banners floated across every street, and buildings and omnibuses were decorated with Lincoln emblems. When the Illinois delegation saw that New York and Pennsylvania had brought in so many outsiders to create enthusiasm for their respective candidates, they began to call in supporters from the neighboring localities. Leonard Swett says that they succeeded in getting together fully 10,000 men from Illinois and Indiana, ready to march, shout, or fight for Lincoln, as the case required.

Not only was the city full of people days before the convention began, but the delegations had organized and actual work was in progress. Every device conceivable by an ingenious opposition was resorted to in order to weaken Seward, the most formidable of the candidates. The night before the opening of the convention a great mass meeting was held in the Wigwam. The Seward men had arranged to have only advocates of their own candidate speak. But the clever opposition detected the game, and William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania, who was for Lincoln or for Wade, got the floor and held it until nearly midnight, doggedly talking against time until an audience of 12,000 had dwindled to less than 1,000.

One of the first of the delegations to begin activities was that of Illinois. The Tremont House had been chosen as its headquarters, and here were gathered

almost all the influential friends Lincoln had in the State. They came determined to win if human effort could compass it, and men never put more intense and persistent energy into a cause. Judge Davis was naturally the head of the body; but Judge Logan, Leonard Swett, John M. Palmer, Richard Oglesby, N. B. Judd, Jesse W. Fell, and scores more were with him. "We worked like nailers," says Governor Oglesby to-day, in talking over the struggle.

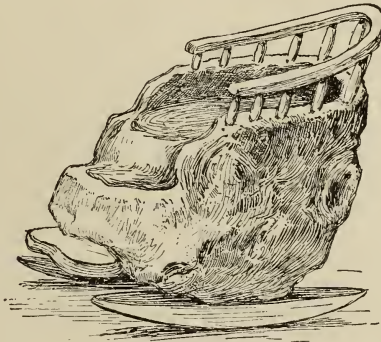
The effort for Lincoln had to begin in the Illinois delegation itself. In spite of the rail episode at Decatur, the State convention was by no means unanimous for Lincoln. "Our delegation was instructed

for him," wrote Leonard Swett to Josiah Drummond,* "but of the twenty-two votes in it, by incautiously selecting the men, there were *eight* who would have gladly gone for Seward. The reason of this is in this fact: the northern counties of this State are more overwhelmingly Republican than any other portion of the continent. I could pick twenty-five contiguous counties giving larger Republican majorities than any other adjacent counties in any State. The result is, many people there are for Seward, and such men

had crept upon the delegation. They intended in good faith to go for Lincoln, but talked despondingly, and really wanted and expected finally to vote as I have indicated. We had also in the north and about Chicago a class of men who always want to turn up on the winning side, and who would do no work, although their feelings were really for us, for fear it would be the losing element and would place them out of favor with the incoming power. These men were dead weights. The centre and south, with many individual exceptions to the classes I have named, were warmly for Lincoln, whether he won or lost.

"The lawyers of our circuit went there

* This letter, written by Mr. Swett on May 27, 1860, to Josiah Drummond of Maine, is one of the best documents on the convention. It was published in the New York "Sun" of July 26, 1891, and is in O. H. Oldroyd's recent work, "Lincoln's Campaign."



CHAIR OCCUPIED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1860.
IT WAS THE FIRST CHAIR MADE IN THE STATE
OF MICHIGAN.

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and Brothers.

determined to leave no stone unturned; and really they, aided by some of our State officers and a half dozen men from various portions of the State, were the only tireless, sleepless, unwavering, and ever vigilant friends he had."

The situation which the Illinois delegation faced, briefly put, was this: the Republican party had in 1860 but one prominent candidate, William H. Seward. By virtue of his great talents, his superior cultivation, and his splendid services in anti-slavery agitation, he was the choice of the majority of the Republican party. It was certain that at the opening of the convention he would have nearly enough votes to nominate him. But still there was a considerable and resolute opposition. The grounds of this were several, but the most substantial and convincing was that Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey all declared that they could not elect Seward if he was nominated. Andrew G. Curtin of Pennsylvania, and Henry S. Lane of Indiana, candidates for governor in their respective States, were both his active opponents, not from dislike of him, but because they were convinced that they would themselves be defeated if he headed the Republican ticket. It was clear to the entire party that Pennsylvania and Indiana were essential to Republican success; and since many States with which Seward was the first choice held success in November as more important than Seward, they were willing to give their support to an "available" man. But the difficulty was to unite this opposition. Nearly every State which considered Seward an unsafe candidate had a "favorite son" whom it was pushing as "available." Pennsylvania wanted Cameron; New Jersey, Dayton; Ohio, Chase, McLean, or Wade; Massachusetts, Banks; Vermont, Collamer. Greeley, who alone was as influential as a State delegation, urged Bates of Missouri.

Illinois's task was to unite this opposition on Lincoln. She began her work with a next-door neighbor. "The first State approached," says Mr. Swett, "was Indiana. She was about equally divided between Bates and McLean.* Saturday, Sunday, and Monday were spent upon her, when finally she came to us unitedly, with twenty-six votes, and from that time acted efficiently with us."

With Indiana to aid her, Illinois now suc-

ceeded in drawing a few scattering votes, in making an impression on New Hampshire and Virginia, and in persuading Vermont to think of Lincoln as a second choice. Matters began to look decidedly cheerful. On May 14th (Monday) the New York "Herald's" last despatch declared that the contest had narrowed down to Seward, Lincoln, and Wade. The Boston "Herald's" despatch of the same day reported: "Abe Lincoln is looming up to-night as a compromise candidate, and his friends are in high spirits." And this was the situation when the convention finally opened on Wednesday, May 16th.

THE WIGWAM.

The assembly-room in which the convention met was situated conveniently at the corner of Market and Lake Streets. It had been built especially for the occasion by the Chicago Republican Club, and in the fashion of the West in that day was called by the indigenous name of Wigwam. It was a low, characterless structure, fully 180 feet long by one hundred feet wide. The roof rose in the segment of a circle, so that one side was higher than the other; and across this side and the two ends were deep galleries. Facing the ungalleried side was a platform reserved for the delegates—a great floor 140 feet long and thirty-five feet deep, raised some four feet from the ground level, with committee-rooms at each end. This vast structure of pine boards had been rescued from ugliness through the energetic efforts of the committee, assisted by the Republican women of the city, who, scarcely less interested than their husbands and brothers, strove in every way to contribute to the success of the convention. They wreathed the pillars and the galleries with masses of green; hung banners and flags; brought in busts of American notables; ordered great allegorical paintings of Justice, Liberty, and the like, to suspend on the walls; borrowed the whole series of Healy portraits of American statesmen—in short, made the Wigwam at least gay and festive in aspect. Foreign interest added something to the furnishings; the chair placed on the platform for the use of the chairman of the convention was donated from Michigan, as the first chair made in that State. It was an arm-chair of the most primitive description, the seat dug out of an immense log and mounted on large rockers. Another chair, one made for the occasion, attracted a great deal of attention. It was

* Mr. Joseph Medill, who has very kindly annotated Mr. Swett's letter for us, says that half the Indiana delegation had been won for Lincoln on the ground of availability before the convention met.

constructed of thirty-four kinds of wood, each piece from a different State or Territory, Kansas being appropriately represented by the "weeping willow" as a symbol of her grief at being still excluded from the sisterhood of States.* The gavel used by the chairman was more interesting even than his chair, having been made from a fragment of Commodore Perry's brave "Lawrence."

Into the Wigwam, on the morning of the 16th of May, there crowded fully 10,000 persons. To the spectator in the gallery the scene was vividly picturesque and animated. Around him were packed hundreds of women, gay in the high-peaked, flower-filled bonnets and the bright shawls and plaids of the day. Below, on the platform and floor, were many of the notable men of the United States—William M. Evarts, Thomas Corwin, Carl Schurz, David Wilmot, Thaddeus Stevens, Joshua Giddings, George William Curtis, Francis P. Blair and his two sons, Andrew H. Reeder, George Ashmun, Gideon Welles, Preston King, Cassius M. Clay, Gratz Brown, George S. Boutwell, Thurlow Weed. In the multitude the newspaper representatives outnumbered the delegates. Fully 900 editors and reporters were present, a body scarcely less interesting in its *personnel* than the convention itself. Horace Greeley, Samuel Bowles, Murat Halstead, Isaac H. Bromley, Joseph Medill, Horace White, Joseph Hawley, Henry Villard, A. K. McClure, names so familiar to-day, all represented various journals at Chicago in 1860, and in some cases were active workers in the caucuses. It was evident at once that the members of the convention—some 500 out of the attendant 10,000—were not more deeply interested in its proceedings than the mere spectators, whose approval and disapproval, quickly and emphatically expressed, swayed, and to a degree controlled, the delegates.

Wednesday and Thursday mornings were passed in the usual opening work of a convention. While officers were formally elected and a platform adopted, the real interest centred in the caucuses, which were held almost uninterruptedly. Illinois was in a frenzy of anxiety. "No men ever worked as our boys did," wrote Mr. Swett; "I did not, the whole week, sleep two hours a night." They ran from delegation to delegation, haranguing, pleading, promising. But do their best they could not concentrate the opposition. "Our great struggle," says Senator

Palmer, "was to prevent Lincoln's nomination for the Vice-Presidency. The Seward men were perfectly willing that he should go on the tail of the ticket. In fact, they seemed determined that he should be given the Vice-Presidential nomination. We were not troubled so much by the antagonism of the Seward men as by the overtures they were constantly making to us. They literally overwhelmed us with kindness. Judge David Davis came to me in the Tremont House, greatly agitated at the way things were going. He said: 'Palmer, you must go with me at once to see the New Jersey delegation.' I asked what I could do. 'Well,' said he, 'there is Judge Hornblower, a grave and venerable judge, who is insisting that Lincoln shall be nominated for Vice-President and Seward for President. We must convince the judge of his mistake.' We went; I was introduced to Judge Hornblower, and we talked about the matter for some time. Judge Hornblower praised Seward, but he was especially effusive in expressing his admiration for Lincoln. He thought that Seward was clearly entitled to first place and that Lincoln's eminent merits entitled him to second place. I listened for some time, and then said: 'Judge Hornblower, you may nominate Mr. Lincoln for Vice-President if you please. But I want you to understand that there are 40,000 Democrats in Illinois who will support this ticket if you give them an opportunity. We are not Whigs, and we never expect to be Whigs. We will never consent to support two old Whigs on this ticket. We are willing to vote for Mr. Lincoln with a Democrat on the ticket, but we will not consent to vote for two Whigs.' I have seldom seen Judge Hornblower's indignation equalled. Turning to Judge Davis he said: 'Judge Davis, is it possible that party spirit so prevails in Illinois that Judge Palmer properly represents public opinion?' 'Oh,' said Davis, affecting some distress at what I had said, 'oh, Judge, you can't account for the conduct of these old Locofocos.' 'Will they do as Palmer says?' 'Certainly. There are 40,000 of them, and, as Palmer says, not one of them will vote for two Whigs.' We left Hornblower in a towering rage. When we were back at the Tremont House I said: 'Davis, you are an infernal rascal to sit there and hear Hornblower berate me as he did. You really seemed to encourage him.' Judge Davis said nothing, but chuckled as if he had greatly enjoyed the joke. This incident is illustrative of the

* Boston "Atlas and Bee," May 22, 1860.

kind of work we had to do. We were compelled to resort to this argument—that the old Democrats then ready to affiliate with the Republican party would not tolerate two Whigs on the ticket—in order to break up the movement to nominate Lincoln for Vice-President. The Seward men recognized in Lincoln their most formidable rival, and that was why they wished to get him out of the way by giving him second place on the ticket.”*

The uncertainty on Thursday was harrowing, and if the ballot had been taken on the afternoon of that day, as was at first intended, Seward probably would have been nominated. Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania all felt this, and shrewdly managed to secure from the convention a reluctant adjournment until Friday morning. In spite of the time this manœuvre gave, however, Seward's nomination seemed sure; so Greeley telegraphed the “Tribune” at midnight on Thursday. At the same hour the correspondent of the “Herald” (New York) telegraphed: “The friends of Seward are firm, and claim ninety votes for him on the first ballot. Opposition to Seward not fixed on any man. Lincoln is the strongest, and may have altogether forty votes. The various delegations are still caucusing.”

It was after these messages were sent that Illinois and Indiana summoned all their energies for a final desperate effort to unite the uncertain delegates on Lincoln, and that Pennsylvania went through the last violent throes of coming to a decision. The night was one full of dramatic episodes, of which none, perhaps, was more nearly tragic than the spectacle of Seward's followers, confident of success, celebrating in advance the nomination of their favorite, while scores of determined men laid the plans ultimately effective for his overthrow. All night the work was kept up. “Hundreds of Pennsylvanians, Indianians, and Illinoisans,” says Murat Halstead, “never closed their eyes. I saw Henry S. Lane at one o'clock, pale and haggard, with cane under his arm, walking as if for a wager from one caucus-room to another at the Tremont House. In connection with them he had been operating to bring the Vermonters and Virginians to the point of deserting Seward.”

In the Pennsylvania delegation, which on Wednesday had agreed on McLean as its second choice and Lincoln as its third, a hot struggle was waged to secure the vote of the delegation *as a unit* for Cam-

eron until a majority of the delegates directed otherwise. Judge S. Newton Pettis, who proposed this resolution, worked all night to secure votes for it at the caucus to be held early in the morning. The Illinois men ran from delegate to caucus, from editor to outsider. No man who knew Lincoln and believed in him, indeed, was allowed to rest, but was dragged away to this or that delegate to persuade him that the “rail candidate,” as Lincoln had already begun to be called, was fit for the place. Colonel Hoyt, then a resident of Chicago, spent half the night telling Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania what he knew of Lincoln. While all this was going on, a committee of twelve men from Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa were consulting in the upper story of the Tremont House. Before their session was over they had agreed that in case Lincoln's votes reached a specified number on the following day, the votes of the States represented in that meeting, so far as these twelve men could effect the result, should be given to him.

The night was over at last, and at ten o'clock the convention reassembled. The great Wigwam was packed with a throng hardly less excited than the members of the actual convention, while without, for blocks away, a crowd double that within pushed and strained, every nerve alert to catch the movements of the convention.

The nominations began at once, the Hon. William M. Evarts presenting the name of William H. Seward. The New Yorkers had prepared a tremendous *claque*, which now broke forth—“a deafening shout which,” says Leonard Swett, “I confess, appalled us a little.” But New York in preparing her *claque* had only given an idea to Illinois. The Illinois committee, to offset it, had made secret but complete preparations for what was called a “spontaneous demonstration.” From lake front to prairie the committee had collected every stentorian voice known, and early Thursday morning, while Seward's men were marching exultantly about the streets, the owners of these voices had been packed into the Wigwam, where their special endowment would be most effective. The women present had been requested to wave their handkerchiefs at every mention of Lincoln's name, and hundreds of flags had been distributed to be used in the same way. A series of signals had been arranged to communicate to the thousands without the moment when a

* Interview with Senator Palmer for McClure's Magazine.

roar from them might influence the convention within. When N. B. Judd nominated Lincoln this machinery began to work. It did well; but a moment later, in greeting the seconding of Seward's nomination, New York out-bellowed Illinois. "Caleb B. Smith of Indiana then seconded the nomination of Lincoln," says Mr. Swett, "and the West came to his rescue. No mortal ever before saw such a scene. The idea of us Hoosiers and Suckers being outscramed would have been as bad to them as the loss of their man. Five thousand people at once leaped to their seats, women not wanting in the number, and the wild yell made soft vesper breathings of all that had preceded. No language can describe it. A thousand steam whistles, ten acres of hotel gongs, a tribe of Comanches, headed by a choice van-guard from pandemonium, might have mingled in the scene unnoticed."

As the roar died out a voice cried, "Abe Lincoln has it by the sound now; let us ballot!" and Judge Logan, beside himself with screeching and excitement, called out: "Mr. President, in order or out of order, I propose this convention and audience give three cheers for the man who is evidently their nominee."

The balloting followed without delay. The Illinois men believed they had one hundred votes to start with; on counting they found they had 102. More hopeful still, no other opposition candidate approached them. Pennsylvania's man, according to the printed reports of that day, had but fifty and one half votes; Greeley's man, forty-eight; Chase, forty-nine; while McLean, Pennsylvania's second choice, had but twelve. If Seward was to be beaten, it must be now; and it was for Pennsylvania to say. The delegation hurried to a committee-room, where Judge Pettis, disregarding the action of the caucus by which McLean had been adopted as the delegation's second choice, moved that, on the second ballot, Pennsylvania's vote be cast solidly for Lincoln. The motion was carried. Returning to the hall the delegation found the second ballot under way. In a moment the name of Pennsylvania was called. The whole Wigwam heard the answer: "Pennsylvania casts her fifty-two votes for Abraham Lincoln." The meaning was clear. The break to Lincoln had begun. New York sat as if stupefied, while all over the hall cheer followed cheer.

It seemed but a moment before the second ballot was ended, and it was known

that Lincoln's vote had risen from 102 to 181. The tension as the third ballot was taken was almost unbearable. A hundred pencils kept score while the delegations were called, and it soon became apparent that Lincoln was outstripping Seward. The last vote was hardly given before the whisper went around, "Two hundred and thirty-one and one-half for Lincoln; two and one-half more will give him the nomination." An instant of silence followed, in which the convention grappled with the idea, and tried to pull itself together to act. The chairman of the Ohio delegation was the first to get his breath. "Mr. President," he cried, springing on his chair and stretching out his arm to secure recognition, "I rise to change four votes from Mr. Chase to Mr. Lincoln."

It took a moment to realize the truth. New York saw it, and the white faces of her noble delegation were bowed in despair. Greeley saw it, and a guileless smile spread over his features as he watched Thurlow Weed press his hand hard against his wet eyelids. Illinois saw it, and tears poured from the eyes of more than one of the overwrought, devoted men as they grasped one another's hands and vainly struggled against the sobs which kept back their shouts. The crowd saw it, and broke out in a mad hurrah. "The scene which followed," wrote one spectator,* "baffles all human description. After an instant's silence, as deep as death, which seemed to be required to enable the assembly to take in the full force of the announcement, the wildest and mightiest yell (for it can be called by no other name) burst forth from 10,000 voices which we ever heard from mortal throats. This strange and tremendous demonstration, accompanied with leaping up and down, tossing hats, handkerchiefs, and canes recklessly into the air, with the waving of flags, and with every other conceivable mode of exultant and unbridled joy, continued steadily and without pause for perhaps ten minutes.

"It then began to rise and fall in slow and billowing bursts, and for perhaps the next five minutes these stupendous waves of uncontrollable excitement, now rising into the deepest and fiercest shouts, and then sinking like the ground swell of the ocean into hoarse and lessening murmurs, rolled through the multitude. Every now and then it would seem as though the physical power of the assembly was exhausted and

* Editorial in the Boston "Traveller" of May 23, 1860.

that quiet would be restored, when all at once a new hurricane would break out, more prolonged and terrific than anything before. If sheer exhaustion had not prevented, we don't know but the applause would have continued to this hour."

Without, the scene was repeated. At the first instant of realization in the Wigwam a man on the platform had shouted to a man stationed on the roof, "Hallelujah; Abe Lincoln is nominated!" A cannon boomed the news to the multitude below, and 20,000 throats took up the cry. The city heard it, and one hundred guns on the Tremont House, innumerable whistles on the river and lake front, on locomotives and factories, and the bells in all the steeples, broke forth. For twenty-four hours the clamor never ceased. It spread to the prairies, and before morning they were afire with pride and excitement.

HOW LINCOLN RECEIVED THE NEWS.

And while all this went on, where was Lincoln? Too much of a candidate, as he had told Swett, to go to Chicago, yet hardly enough of one to stay away, he had ended by remaining in Springfield, where he spent the week in restless waiting and discussion. He drifted about the public square, went often to the telegraph office, looked out for every returning visitor from Chicago, played occasional games of ball, made fruitless efforts to read, went home at unusual hours. He felt in his bones that he had a fighting chance, so he told a friend, but the chance was not so strong that he would indulge in much exultation. By Friday morning he was tired and depressed, but still eager for news. One of his friends, the Hon. James C. Conkling, returned early in the day from Chicago, and Lincoln soon went around to his law office. "Upon entering," says Mr. Conkling, "Lincoln threw himself upon the office lounge, and remarked rather wearily, 'Well, I guess I'll go back to practising law.' As he lay there on the lounge, I gave him such information as I had been able to obtain. I told him the tendency was to drop Seward; that the outlook for him was very encouraging. He listened attentively, and thanked me, saying I had given him a clearer idea of the situation than he had been able to get from any

other source. He was not very sanguine of the result. He did not express the opinion that he would be nominated."*

But he could not be quiet, and soon left Mr. Conkling, to join the throng around the telegraph office, where the reports from the convention were coming in. The nominations were being reported, his own among the others. Then news came that the balloting had begun. He could not endure to wait for the result. He remembered a commission his wife had given him that morning, and started across the square to execute it. His errand was done, and he was standing in the door of the shop, talking, when a shout went up from the group at the telegraph office. The next instant an excited boy came rushing pell-mell down the stairs of the office, and, plunging through the crowd, ran across the square, shouting, "Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Lincoln, you are nominated!" The cry was repeated on all sides. The people came flocking about him, half laughing, half crying, shaking his hand when they got it, and one another's when they couldn't. For a few minutes, carried away by excitement, Lincoln seemed simply one of the proud and exultant crowd. Then remembering what it all meant, he said, "My friends, I am glad to receive your congratulations, and as there is a little woman down on Eighth Street who will be glad to hear the news, you must excuse me until I inform her." He slipped away, telegram in hand, his coat-tails flying out behind, and strode towards home, only to find when he reached there that his friends were before him, and that the "little woman" already knew that the honor which for twenty years and more she had believed and stoutly declared her husband deserved, and which a great multitude of men had sworn to do their best to obtain for him, had at last come.

Thirty-six hours later Lincoln received the committee sent by the convention to notify him formally of his selection as the Republican candidate for the Presidency of the United States; but before that time the whole country knew of his nomination, and the North and West were ringing with the stirring chorus:

"Hurrah for our cause—of all causes the best!
Hurrah for old Abe, Honest Abe of the West!"

* Interview with Mr. Conkling for McClure's Magazine.